

Convener's Report for 2017

Canberra Academy of Languages

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Mailing address: GPO Box 1627, Canberra ACT 2601

Reception phone number: +61 – 2 – 6152 9140

Organisational website: www.cal.act.edu.au

Resources website: www.languages.org.au

ABN: 73 256 637 048

ACT Incorporated Entity / Association Number: A05776 (September 2016)

Registered as a Specialist Education Provider with ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies to 31/12/2022



Founding the Canberra Academy of Languages

The Canberra Academy of Languages is a not-for-profit organisation, established in September 2016, in response to the need for a specialist facility for language learning in the ACT. It complements previously existing senior secondary programs for language learning in the Canberra region. While there are schools of languages or language centres in four other educational jurisdictions, there was no existing capacity or evident commitment to make such a provision through the ACT Government budget.

We identified two aspects to for us to address in the ACT situation:

- Canberra as the national capital should foster engagement and build capacity to participate effectively with the global community.
- As a major regional centre, the city should provide opportunities for language learning reflecting the presence of groups within the area, both those with connections to Indigenous languages and those with connections to languages and cultures outside Australia.



Our launch was held here at the Canberra Museum and Gallery on Tuesday 17 January 2017, attended by 50 guests. A keynote was presented by our Patron, Mr Dennis Flannery. This was followed by addresses from two former Hawker College students of French, Heather Macpherson and Emily Fisher.

CAL teaching program in 2017

This year's teaching program covered the Board of Senior Secondary Studies Continuing/Advanced French units The World Around Us (Semester 1) and Lifestyle and Traditions (Semester 2). French was the medium of instruction and interaction – a practice that, to the credit of our students, they readily adopted. We used a 50-50 mix of on-site and off-site delivery supported by our resources website,

www.languages.org.au. In addition to on-site sessions, there were excursions to the Versailles exhibition and the French Film Festival in Semester 1, and to Breizh Café and the Alliance Française in Semester 2.



Hayley and Bernadette, students in the foundation year of our programs, exemplify the qualities of learners for whom our organisation has been set up. They chose to acquire a second language and they have pursued that learning intention consistently over a number of years. They have set a path for themselves towards achieving bilingualism. They are highly motivated to engage with French language and culture.

Registration of CAL and plans for 2018

With provisional registration confirmed in mid-December 2016, it was not possible to consult widely about programs for 2017. However, our students this year were keen to complete their majors in French. They are receiving credit for their French studies and for us to pilot the delivery of programs and build a collection of online resources.

I am pleased to report that the Canberra Academy of Languages received registration with the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies in September 2017 as a Specialist Education Provider, with effect until December 2022.



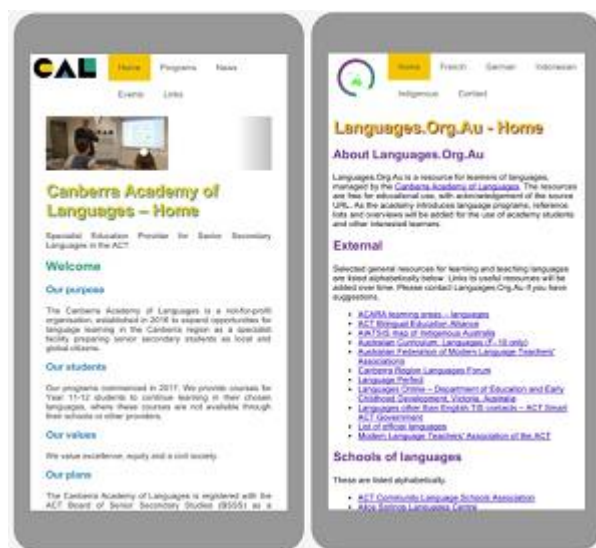
Marketing

We have run an active campaign throughout the year in marketing our programs. We sent information to secondary school principals and deputy principals. We advertised on the digital billboard at the Canberra Convention Centre and in The Canberra Times. I held an interview on 11 September with Victor Marillanca on 2XX. We launched a Facebook page and then ran an information evening at the Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) on 14 September. Our two current students of French represented us very capably at the Community Languages Day at EPIC on Saturday 21 November 2017. We had a campaign running for three weeks (extended from two weeks booked) in November on new digital billboards in the Canberra Centre.

Online presence

On our two publicly accessible websites, www.cal.act.edu.au for organisational information and www.languages.org.au for languages resources, which went online at the end of 2016, we have implemented responsive design principles so that pages are rendered dynamically to suit users' mobile and desktop devices. We also established a Facebook presence in September 2017.

The organisational website provides contact details (including a link to our Facebook page), enrolment information, news and an events calendar. The languages resources website includes information for the current French programs, such as unit outlines, term overviews, weekly modules and topic-based resources. Looking ahead to our planned future programs, it also offers links to resources for German, Indonesian and Indigenous languages.



Professional networking

In August 2016, Ros and I made a visit to the South Australian School of Languages. This was an outstanding opportunity to talk with the Principal, Lia Tedesco (who is also a national leader in languages education and a former president of the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations, about their philosophy and operations as a centre giving opportunities to almost 2000 students to learn the languages of their choice in Adelaide.



The visit of a delegation of educational leaders from Guangdong Province in March of this year provided the occasion for a seminar that Dr Fuxin Li, Principal of the Australian Contemporary School of Chinese, invited me to present on performance assessment, professional development and pedagogy. There was great interest in what is happening in these areas in the ACT and in Australia – including the role of AITSL with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Australian Professional Standard for Principals; ACER with the National School Improvement Tool for self-evaluation by schools; professional associations such as MLTA and AFMLTA with professional development; TQI with teacher registration.



Consulting with colleagues at Macquarie Primary School this year, it has been inspiring to see their work with the languages curriculum, drawing on the linguistic expertise that resides in the 40% EALD community and on the pedagogical expertise of teaching staff.



On 12 May 2017, I was pleased to sign an agreement on collaboration with the Director of the Alliance Française de Canberra, Patrice Gilles and I appreciate the work of the former Business Development Manager, Vincent Brousse, in facilitating the signing. We have complementary roles in providing opportunities



for learners of French in the Canberra region. The Canberra Academy of Languages offer courses for credit towards the ACT Senior Secondary Certificate, while the Alliance Française provides conversation classes, cultural events and DELF certification. This partnership reflects our focus on working with students, families and schools to provide expanded opportunities for language learning that complement existing programs in languages offered in the ACT.

I presented the concept and plans of the Canberra Academy of Languages, and in August, Ros and I attended the annual Australian Network of Government Languages Schools (ANGLS) Conference in Adelaide. ANGLS, with specialist languages schools from five of the eight Australian education jurisdictions, was a valuable opportunity to meet and exchange insights about languages education in Australia.

At the 2017 AFMLTA Conference in July at Bond University, Gold Coast,



Course development

A significant gap that we identified in ACT curriculum for Years 11-12 is in Indigenous languages. In July, after investigation and consultation with a reference group, I sent a proposal to ACT BSSS for course writing in this area. BSSS now has work under way on an Indigenous language and culture course, along with further community consultation. I am particularly appreciative of the time and expertise of the reference group (including colleagues at AIATSIS and ANU Linguistics), members of the Indigenous community both in the ACT and outside, members of the writing panel, and BSSS colleagues for this project.



I have also received expressions of interest from Arabic and Greek language communities about the possibility of developing senior secondary courses and have discussed future directions with them. We hope that there will be further progress on these next year.

Future directions

Looking further ahead, for the 2020 school year, we believe the ACT Government should assume responsibility for CAL's operation, to ensure continuity and equity in access to



languages programs for students in all areas of the ACT. This is consistent with practice in the four other jurisdictions that have similar schools of languages in SA, NT, NSW and Victoria. We have made a submission to ACT Government about this in its current Future of Education Conversation, a copy of which is available via the News page on our website.

Concluding remarks

Congratulations to Hayley Telford and Bernadette Bamber, our highly successful students in our foundation year, who will speak at the end-of-year ceremony from a learner's perspective about their experiences and motivations in learning about French language and culture.

We wish you all a safe and enjoyable summer break and an excellent year ahead for 2018.

Frank Keighley | Convener, Canberra Academy of Languages